



# The Journal



**FRIDAY**  
April 27, 2007

Serving the Eastern Counties of West Virginia Since 1907

50 cents

## JEFFERSON COUNTY

# Old quarry up for rezoning

## Planning Commission will likely hear request in June

By **BETH HENRY**  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

**CHARLES TOWN** — Plans for a controversial business development on the Old Standard Quarry property moved forward Thursday when Jefferson County commissioners agreed to send a rezoning petition to the county's planning

board and request a public hearing.

County commissioners voted unanimously to request that the Jefferson County Planning Commission set a public hearing on the old quarry rezoning petition either on or before June 12, and they said they expect a large turnout because the project has drawn criticism from

representatives of the nearby Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Because a public hearing must be held within 60 days of receiving a rezoning petition, county commissioners debated whether they wanted to schedule the public hearing or let the Planning Commission set one up. The old quarry rezoning

petition was received April 17.

"We can do it, or they (planning commissioners) can do it, either one," said County Commissioner Dale Manuel during Thursday's regular meeting, before the commission decided to give the Planning Commission the opportunity to have the

See **QUARRY A2**



Journal graphic by Allison Corbin

## Quarry

FROM PAGE A1

public hearing.

The Old Standard LLC project site is south of U.S. 340, and plans call for a 60,000-square-foot signature office building, a 150-room hotel with a 22,500-square-foot conference center and additional office buildings along the property's lake and the Shenandoah River. Twenty acres of the site would be dedicated as park land, which could be used for hiking and biking trails, as well as for public fishing areas.

The project attracted controversy in recent weeks when its developers sought annexation into Charles Town, but the City Council rejected that request on April 2. Opponents feared the business park and hotel project would threaten Civil War battlefields

and Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, while some City Council members said the project was too far away from the city limits to be annexed.

Developer Herb Jonkers and his legal council then gave a presentation to county leaders on the old quarry project April 12, and submitted a petition for rezoning the next week.

Rezoning requests are sent to the Planning Commission for review, and if the board determines that the rezoning request complies with the county's comprehensive plan, the request goes back to the County Commission for ultimate approval or denial.

The Old Standard Quarry property consists of about 411 acres, which fall into two zoning districts. About 80

acres in the north part of the property are zoned for high density residential use, while the remaining section is in a rural district.

The rezoning petition requests that the County Commission change the property's zoning to allow for commercial use, and argues that the current zoning is a mistake that needs corrected. Since the old quarry was active from the 1880s through 1970s and used as an industrial site, the petition claims the property has never been suitable for a rural district. The quarry contains crumbling buildings and piles of burnt limestone, and part of the property was once the site of the county's old landfill. The developer plans to clean up the property at his own expense.

Attorney J. Michael Cassell of Campbell, Miller and Zimmerman in Charles Town, which is the firm representing the developer, said the business development and hotel will bring much needed high-paying jobs and add to the county's commercial tax base.

During a recent presentation to the County Commission, Cassell said that under the current zoning, 1,634 homes could be built on the property, but that's not what the developer wants to do. He said the county does not need more housing developments, but it does need more places where people can work.

One of the project's opponents is Don Campbell, superintendent of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, who spoke out against the business park during a recent Charles Town Council meeting. Campbell said part of the property lies on a Civil War battlefield site, where

the largest surrender of Union troops took place in September 1862.

The Jefferson County Commission received a letter from another concerned park official this week.

Eric St. John, the mid-Atlantic field representative for the National Parks Conservation Association, sent a letter to commissioners dated April 23, inviting them to meet with park leaders to discuss the old quarry proposal.

"We are concerned about the impacts of the proposed development and the harm it may cause to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park," St. John wrote, adding that he and other park leaders are worried the project will affect the area's scenic beauty.

— Staff writer Beth Henry can be reached at (304) 725-6581 or [bhenry@journal-news.net](mailto:bhenry@journal-news.net)